(c) whether Government propose to set up similar committees in respect of other religious entities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A 7 Member Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajender Sachar which will finalize its report within 15 months w.e.f. the date of its notification *i.e.* 9th March, 2005.

(c) There is no such proposal at present.

(d) Does not arise.

Orthopaedic aids

769. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up more maufacturing units for making orthopaedic aids like wheel-chairs, etc;

(b) whether it is a fact that very old model and archaic wheel chairs and other equipments are still being produced in the country;

(c) the steps that would be taken to ensure that State-of-the art orthopaedic aids and equipment are made in the country;

(d) how Government would bring out this change in a short time; and

(e) the steps proposed to modernize this sector in the interest for the physically challenged people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) No approval of the Government is required for manufacture of wheel chairs or other equipments. Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Company, Kanpur (ALIMCO) is a Public Sector Undertaking under Government of India which produces orthopaedic aids including wheel chairs and tricycles. The products being manufactured by ALIMCO are ISI marked.

(c) to (e) ALIMCO with its own R&D and with the help of other agencies both in India and abroad has developed modern & light weight Aids & Appliances viz, Floor Reaction Orthosis, Light Weight Folding Stretcher, Battery Operated Tricycles and Light Weight Adult Size Wheel Chair, etc. ALIMCO has undertaken research for development of Electric Hand and Myo-Electric Hand, Motorised Wheel Chair, Body Level Hearing Aid with Surface Mounted Technology.

Rehabilitation of mentally challenged persons

770. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a need of trained people, to help mentally challenged persons;

(b) the existing Government organizations/institutions which offer courses or education for the people wishing to enter the field of service of the mentally challenged persons;

(c) whether it is a fact that such institutions are not providing enough people to meet the demand; and

(d) the steps proposed to increase the number of people who would receive education and training to cater to the needs of the mentally challenged children and adults?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Recognizing the need for trained professionals for giving services to persons with mental retardation, a National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped was set up at Hyderabad in 1984 to develop professionals, preparation of service modules and conduct research and development in the field of mental retardation. The Government has also established Rehabilitation Council of India in 1986 subsequently made it a statutory body in 1992 to standardize the courses, ensure quality in the programmes and regulate rehabilitation professionals and personnel.

(c) and (d) Since inception NIMH has trained about 10,000 rehabilitation professionals. Besides, 77,298 professionals have been given continuing education programmes. RCI has recognized 185 organisations including